

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-127. (Canceled)

128. (Currently Amended) A device for providing additional stabilization to tissue already in contact with a primary stabilization member, said device comprising:

a single, substantially rigid, tissue contact member formed in a unitary, continuous loop having a proximal end portion, a distal end portion, and side portions extending between said proximal and distal end portions, and an opening around with said continuous loop is formed, said proximal and distal end portions extending across a width dimension of said contact member and said side portions extending along a length dimension of said contact member, wherein said length dimension is greater than said width dimension, said contact member being adapted to be placed on the tissue in an area bounded by primary tissue contact members, wherein a bottom surface of said contact member includes a contact surface that declines angularly from outer peripheral portions of ~~the portions of the contact surface at an~~ outer periphery of said loop included in said side portions to inner peripheral portions of ~~the portions of the contact surface included in said side portions,~~ wherein said inner portions abut said opening, such that the outer peripheral portions of the contact surface of said side portions are configured to contact the primary stabilization member while the inner peripheral portions of the contact surface of said side portions contact the tissue to provide additional stabilization of the tissue;

a connecting member extending from said at least one tissue contact member and adapted to be hand held or fixed to a relatively immovable object; and

a lumen in fluid communication with said contact member.

129. (Original) The device of claim 128, wherein said tissue contact member comprises a base member having a central opening therethrough, said central opening adapted to allow access to a target site on the tissue.

130. (Original) The device of claim 129, wherein said base member is substantially oval-shaped.

131. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 130, wherein said oval-shaped member cants upwardly around an outer perimeter thereof.

132. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 129, wherein said base member has a substantially hollow interior adapted to develop a negative pressure therein, and said lumen is in fluid communication with said base member.

133. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 132, wherein said lumen extends through at least a portion of said connecting member.

134. (Original) The device of claim 132, wherein said base member further comprises openings through a bottom surface thereof, said openings being fluidly connected with said substantially hollow interior and adapted to apply a negative pressure to the tissue.

135. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 134, wherein said base member further comprises openings through an upper surface thereof, said openings through said upper surface being fluidly connected with a second lumen that is connectable with a source of pressure that is independent of a pressure in said substantially hollow interior of said base member.

136. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 135, wherein said second lumen runs inside of said connecting member.

137. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 135 further comprising a manifold mounted inside said base member and fluidly connecting said second lumen with said openings through said upper surface.

Claims 138-144. (Canceled)

145. (Currently Amended) A device for providing additional stabilization to tissue already in contact with a primary stabilization member, said device comprising:

at least one tissue contact member adapted to be placed on the tissue in an area bounded by primary tissue contact members, wherein said at least one tissue contact member comprises a substantially oval-shaped base member having a central opening therethrough, said central opening adapted to allow access to a target site on the tissue, and wherein said substantially oval-shaped base

member has a contact surface that is a bottom surface of said contact member and cants upwardly around an outer perimeter thereof, in a direction from an inner portion of said contact member interfacing with said central opening toward said outer perimeter, such that elongated sides of the bottom surface are longer than end portions of the bottom surface joining said elongated sides, and outer peripheral portions of the elongated sides portions are configured to contact the primary stabilization member while inner peripheral portions of the elongated sides contact the tissue to provide additional stabilization of the tissue, and wherein said substantially oval-shaped base member has a second opening through at least a portion thereof, said second opening being located peripherally of said central opening; and

a connecting member extending from said at least one tissue contact member and adapted to be hand held or fixed to a relatively immovable object.

146. (Previously Presented) A device for providing additional stabilization to tissue already in contact with a primary stabilization member, said device comprising:

at least one tissue contact member adapted to be placed on the tissue in an area bounded by primary tissue contact members, wherein said at least one tissue contact member comprises a base member having a central opening therethrough, said central opening adapted to allow access to a target site on the tissue, said base member further having a substantially hollow interior adapted to develop a negative pressure therein, wherein said base member further comprises openings through a bottom surface thereof, said openings being fluidly connected with said substantially hollow interior and adapted to apply a negative pressure to the tissue, and openings through an upper surface thereof, said openings through said upper surface being fluidly connected with a lumen that is connectable with a source of pressure that is independent of a pressure in said substantially hollow interior of said base member, wherein said bottom surface comprises a contact surface that forms at least a part of said bottom surface and inclines upwardly in a direction from an inner portion of said bottom surface towards an outer perimeter of said bottom surface said bottom surface having elongated sides joined by end portions, such that said elongated sides are longer than said end portions, and outer peripheral portions of the elongated sides portions are configured to contact the primary stabilization member while inner peripheral portions of the elongated sides contact the tissue to provide additional stabilization of the tissue,; and

a connecting member extending from said at least one tissue contact member and adapted to be hand held or fixed to a relatively immovable object.

147. (Currently Amended) A device for providing additional stabilization to tissue already in contact with a primary stabilization member, said device comprising:

at least one tissue contact member adapted to be placed on the tissue in an area bounded by primary tissue contact members, said at least one tissue contact member comprising a base member having a central opening therethrough, said central opening adapted to allow access to a target site on the tissue, said base member including a bottom, contact surface having an outer perimeter portion that cants upwardly from an inner perimeter portion of said bottom, contact surface interfacing with said central opening, wherein elongated sides of the bottom, contact surface are longer than end portions of the bottom, contact surface joining said elongated sides, and said outer perimeter portion extending along said elongated sides is configured to contact the primary stabilization member while said inner perimeter portion extending along said elongated sides contacts the tissue to provide additional stabilization of the tissue;

a second opening through a portion of said contact member that is not on said bottom surface, said second opening configured to deliver positive pressure therethrough; and

a connecting member extending from said at least one tissue contact member and adapted to be hand held or fixed to a relatively immovable object.

148. (Currently Amended) A device for providing additional stabilization to tissue already in contact with a primary stabilization member, said device comprising:

a single, substantially rigid, tissue contact member formed in a continuous loop and adapted to be placed on the tissue in an area bounded by primary tissue contact members, said single, substantially rigid, tissue contact member including a contact bottom surface that angles from an exterior bottom portion thereof to an interior bottom portion thereof along elongated sides thereof, wherein said elongated sides cause said contact bottom surface to have a greater length than width, whereby said interior portion of said contact bottom surface is configured to approximate tissue while allowing said exterior bottom portion to contact upper surfaces of said primary stabilization member;

an opening through a surface of said tissue contact member, said opening in fluid communication with a lumen, wherein said interior bottom portions along said elongated sides interface with said opening and wherein said elongated sides are canted such that said exterior bottom portions along said sides are higher than corresponding interior bottom portions along said sides; and

a connecting member integrally formed with and extending from said at least one tissue contact

member and adapted to be hand held or fixed to a relatively immovable object.

149. (Currently Amended) A device for providing additional stabilization to tissue already in contact with a primary stabilization member, said device comprising:

a single, substantially rigid, tissue contact member formed in a continuous loop and adapted to be placed on the tissue in an area bounded by primary tissue contact members, wherein said at least one tissue contact member comprises a base member having a central opening therethrough, said central opening adapted to allow access to a target site on the tissue, and wherein said base member is substantially oval-shaped and has a contact bottom surface, wherein elongated portions of said contact bottom surface join proximal and distal end portions of said contact bottom surface causing said contact bottom surface to have a length that is greater than a width of said contact bottom surface, said elongated portions ~~side portion~~ of said contact bottom surface canting upwardly in opposite directions on opposite sides of said central opening, from an interior portion thereof to an outer perimeter thereof, said outer perimeter of said side portions of said bottom contact surface being configured to contact the primary stabilization member while said interior portions contact the tissue to provide additional stabilization;

at least one second opening through said base member; said at least one second opening configured to deliver positive or negative pressure through said base member; and

a connecting member extending from said at least one tissue contact member and adapted to be hand held or fixed to a relatively immovable object.

150. (Currently Amended) A device for providing additional stabilization to tissue already in contact with a primary stabilization member, said device comprising:

a single, substantially rigid, tissue contact member formed in a unitary, continuous loop and adapted to be placed on the tissue in an area bounded by primary tissue contact members, wherein said at least one tissue contact member comprises a base member having a central opening therethrough, said central opening adapted to allow access to a target site on the tissue, wherein said base member has a substantially hollow interior adapted to develop a negative pressure therein, wherein said base member further comprises openings through a bottom surface thereof, said bottom surface inclined upwardly, along a continuous slope, in opposite directions on opposite sides of said central opening, along a direction from an interior perimeter thereof to an exterior perimeter thereof over lengths of said side portions, in a direction transverse to a direction of said lengths of side portions of said loop, said

openings being fluidly connected with said substantially hollow interior and adapted to apply a negative pressure to the tissue, and wherein said base member further comprises openings through an upper surface thereof, said openings through said upper surface being fluidly connected with a lumen that is connectable with a source of pressure that is independent of a pressure in said substantially hollow interior of said base member; and

a connecting member extending from said at least one tissue contact member and adapted to be hand held or fixed to a relatively immovable object.

151. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 150 in contact with the primary stabilization member, such that at least a portion of said exterior perimeter of said bottom surface contacts an upper surface of the primary stabilization member and at least a portion of said interior perimeter contacts the tissue.